APPENDIX II

Marked-up Version of Amended Claims

1. (twice amended) In an MPEG information distribution system, a method for forming a transport stream having a bitrate BR and including one or more programs, said method comprising the steps of:

defining N slots within said transport stream, where N is an integer greater than one, each of said N slots being associated with a respective plurality of non-contiguous transport packets, each of said respective non-contiguous transport packets being separated by N-1 transport packets;

including, within said transport stream being formed, up to N transport encoded programs, where each transport encoded program is associated with one of said N slots and has a bitrate of BR/N; and

in the case of less than N transport encoded programs being included within said transport stream being formed, including NULL transport packets within said transport stream being formed, said NULL packets forming NULL programs within said transport stream being formed.

7. (amended) An apparatus for generating N programs, where N is an integer greater than one, to produce a slotted transport stream respectively having N slots, comprising:

a transport clock source CLK;

N transport encoders for respectively receiving said N programs and producing N program streams;

a frequency divider coupled between the transport clock source and the respective N transport encoders to divide a timing signal CLK from said transport clock source into N timing signals; and

a multiplexer, coupled to an output of said N transport encoders, for sequentially multiplexing one transport packet from each respective transport

encoded program streams to form the slotted transport stream, wherein each transport packet from a single program stream is separated by N-1 transport packets.

11. (amended) An apparatus for generating N programs, where N is an integer greater than one, to produce a slotted transport stream respectively having N slots, comprising:

a transport clock source CLK;

N transport encoders for respectively receiving said N programs and producing N program streams;

a frequency divider coupled between the transport clock source and the respective N transport encoders to divide a timing signal CLK from said transport clock source into N timing signals;

N buffer memories respectively coupled to said N transport encoders; and

a switch, selectively coupled to said N buffer memories for selectively coupling to an output, a packet from each of said N buffer memories, to produce said slotted transport stream, wherein each transport packet from a single program stream is separated by N-1 transport packets.